



Stars are Never Sleeping

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Summary:

Reddie Soulmate AU (IT 2017) // Some mild angst and then some cute fluff //Richie is insecure and Eddie is gay what else is new

1. Chapter One

We live closer to the earth
Never to the heavens
The stars are never far away
The stars are out tonight

- David Bowie, *The Stars*

On the day that you realize who your soulmate is, two bands appear on your wrist, which fill in completely to form a circle around your wrist and your soulmate's wrist once you have both realized your true affection for one another. The soulmate mark is a special event in everyone's life that signifies a new stage in your life and your relationship with another.

You'd be crazy to dislike it. Who wouldn't want to be sure of who their soulmate was?

But Richie Tozier was staring at the two bands on his wrist in horror, wishing more than anything that they weren't there. He knew they couldn't be removed - not without seriously damaging your arm forever - and hiding it was pointless. Regardless of what you wanted, the day that it appeared would be the day that you and your soulmate become one forever.

And it scared the *shit* out of Richie that it could be someone other than Eddie Kaspbrak.

Eddie Kaspbrak was afraid of many things. Getting really sick, clowns (one specifically, to be fully truthful), older kids, his mom being mad at him, not being there for his friends or them not being there for him. Richie's socks.

Eddie Kaspbrak also didn't tell his friends everything that he kept within himself.

Like how when the assholes in the upper grades called him a faggot, it dug into his skin more than it should and took root to pain him all too frequently.

Or that his mother disapproved of him being with the Losers Club boys because she was sure that these boys would do something to "infect" her little Eddie.

Or how being with boys certainly seemed to infect him in ways that terrified him and kept him constantly stressed and gradually losing more sleep. Getting older just meant going through more changes and feeling much more than he used to, especially towards certain people.

Eddie dreaded the day that his soul-mark showed up, because he would have to face his fear.

Clowns threatening to eat his friends were one thing. That was tangible. Something you could hit, fight, destroy. Kill.

But Eddie liking boys wasn't.

The Losers Club had an unofficial spot for lunch, around the corner of the school's wall, in a patch of grass near a tree where they would all sit to eat. Eddie would sit on the tree roots instead of the grass, and was content to listen to the other boys talk as he ate somewhat slowly, considering the cast covering his still-broken arm and restricting his movements. Descending into a sewer and fighting Pennywise hadn't been the best way to recover.

Richie came stomping over - not really stomping, but his presence was never quiet - already talking his head off about a test in chemistry that his "fucking bitch" teacher had sprung on them and how he was gonna "fuckin' fail this shit".

"I'm sure you'll do fine with chemistry Rich," Mike said, not sparing a glance at Richie, as he and Ben were engaged in a research project made up of papers and books scattered all over. "You're full of hot air and reactions."

"Fuck off!" Richie objected, taking his spot next to Eddie, digging

into the lunch he had gotten from the cafeteria.

Bill was sitting next to Richie with Stan, closest to Richie's right arm. Richie was wearing a long-sleeved shirt, which was understandable given that it was beginning to get colder, except for the fact that Richie would gladly wear shorts and a t-shirt until mid-january if he weren't made to bundle up by Eddie or someone of equal common sense.

And of course, Bill noticed the dark bands encircling Richie's wrist.

"Y-you got y-y-your s-soul mark?" Bill said, curiously pushing up Richie's sleeve, who seemed to jerk when his wrist was touched.

Thinking fast he shot off a retort - "Yeah, have you seen your mom recently? I'm sure we're matching."

"Shut it dude, you're lucky," Stan said, his pale wrists notably lacking any mark. Actually, the only member of their group with a mark was Ben, stark and obvious on his wrist, a match to the one on Beverly Marsh's wrist, states away. They had connected much more before Beverly left for good, and realized they were soulmates pretty quickly. But both of them agreed it was best for Beverly to be with her aunt. Ben was patient.

There was also the unspoken idea that Ben and Beverly might just happen to see each other again in 27 years' time.

Richie pulled his sleeve up again and went back to eating, clearly not wanting to address the mark any further. He couldn't help but notice, however, that Eddie had remained silent the whole time, seeming to almost avoid looking at Richie.

And that Eddie's cast covered his wrist entirely, erasing any trace that there could be a mark there.

2. Chapter Two

Richie was doodling on a table in the library when Bill found him after his last class had ended, ruining the lead on his pencil tip as he pressed it harshly into the wooden surface, not making any drawing or pattern, just because he couldn't distract himself any other way.

"This s-s-seat ta-taken?" Bill asked, sitting down anyways. Richie's right wrist had red lines from rubbing and eraser shavings scattered about as if he could just get rid of it.

"Please don't talk about it," Richie said, his voice softer than his usual nature.

"T-too bad." Richie shot a glare at Bill, which quickly fell. Richie wasn't great with how he felt, it's not that he was afraid of being homosexual, but as he had confided in Bill before, he truly felt like Eddie was the one for him.

Sure, Eddie was annoying, and a goody two-shoes sometimes.

But there was in fact one good thing that came from the Neibolt house. Pennywise had used what would scare Richie the most. The MISSING poster that Richie knew would never be real if he actually went missing. The coffin and his stitched mouth. The stupid fucking clown mannequins in the second-floor room.

Eddie.

Richie had never felt more afraid and yet calm in his entire life than he had felt when he was next to Eddie, who was crying and scared and barely able to breath, injured, both of them possibly about to be killed by a fucking clown monster. All Richie could focus on was Eddie and all he could do or think about was “help Eddie”.

He would willingly die for him. More than that - he would fight for him or die trying.

And the idea that it could all just be Richie’s infatuation felt like the heaviest weight in the world.

There had been a night that Richie was with Bill, which had become more common after the events of the summer. Both of them had felt so much and neither of them felt like they could let down their defenses to not be alone. Bill had lost so much, not just Georgie - he had felt like he couldn’t protect his friends, and he had felt like he failed Stan and damaged the group forever. When he had agreed to let Pennywise take him and only him, he meant it. He would do it again and again and again with no hesitation if that’s what it would take to save his friends.

Richie always put on a great show, not caring about what had happened to him personally, he couldn’t ruin his image by being vulnerable.

Except that he had lost Eddie in the Neibolt house, and he hadn’t been able to protect Stan in the sewers, and that seeing Bill broken

and defeated had nearly defeated him as well. Richie was always the extra wheel. Mike and Ben and Beverly had joined the group so seamlessly, regardless of the fact that it had originally just been Stan, and Bill and Eddie and Richie. The four of them against the world. And it seemed like Richie had been pushed over to the side.

Bill snapped Richie back to the real world.

“R-r-r-richie, y-you sh-s-sh. *S-shit* . T-talk to him.”

“Why?” Richie suddenly interjected. “So I can make a fucking fool out of myself and have him be fucking afraid of me? I don’t th-th-think s-s-so, *Billy* .”

Bill’s face flushed red. “B-B- *Bill*, ” he said. Georgie called him Billy. No one else did.

Richie grabbed his backpack, standing up suddenly. “What-fuckin-ever. I’m leaving. I don’t need to deal with this.”

Bill looked hurt and Richie immediately regretted his actions, wishing he could *beep beep* his own stupid fucking mouth, but he always seemed to be just a bit too late to fix everything he did.

He left Bill alone in the library, the Fall gloom outside transitioning into the start of night.

3. Chapter Three

Eddie had felt sure that Richie wasn't feeling right all day, probably because of the appearance of the mark on his wrist, but it was still very uncharacteristically Richie to dismiss it, rather than cracking more jokes, and being eager to meet his soulmate.

And the appearance of Richie's mark had set Eddie's mind spinning all day. Eddie and Richie were best friends, had nearly always been. He probably knew more about Richie than anyone and was closest to him than his family could ever be. So having his own friend not talk to him about something this big and important was hurting, a lot.

And it also didn't help that Eddie felt more for Richie than just friendship. He had for a very long time, possibly since the first time they had met. He had no clue what was so endearing about his constant bad jokes and even worse swearing streak. But Richie had been his escape from his mom, Stan and Bill as well, but Richie was where Eddie really felt like his own person, where his worth wasn't based on how he was defined by his mother or his issues. The summer had just cemented that further.

And now Richie was going to find his own soulmate and it wouldn't be Eddie. And it would change their relationship just enough to not be the same again.

Eddie had been pacing in his room, unable to concentrate on anything - he hadn't touched his homework, he barely had any interest in his dinner. He kept waiting for a call from Richie, to hear him talking a mile a minute about some girl he was soulmates with, for some sense of normality. But there was only pounding silence which couldn't be drowned out by music.

When Eddie's phone did ring, it shot straight to his nerves, and he was torn between being completely frozen and rushing to answer it, somehow doing both at once and tugging the phone off of the wall mount.

"Richie?" he said quickly, pressing the phone into his ear as if it would make Richie speak faster somehow.

"It's B-Bill," Eddie heard, and couldn't help but feel disappointed somewhat.

"Oh. Sorry. I th-"

"G-go to the arc-c-ade," Bill said, cutting Eddie off. That hadn't happened before. "R-roof. Richie."

Eddie was about to start asking dozens of questions, all of those which had been spinning through his mind for the past several hours, but before he could, Bill hung up. That *DEFINITELY* hadn't happened before. Something was wrong.

Without even sparing a second thought, Eddie hung the phone up on the wall. He was just about to leave when he passed by the drawer closest to the kitchen wall. He slid it open, taking out a pair of tough scissors from inside and tucking them into his pocket, and then proceeded to walk straight out of the door and grab his bike. Screw

explaining anything to his mom right now. He had to be somewhere.

Richie was alone on the roof of the arcade, just sitting there. It's where he would go when he just needed to be away from everything and everyone else, except he couldn't escape himself. Which is who he was really running from.

His atmosphere was broken by a clattering from down behind the arcade, and then the unmistakable sound of someone scaling the ladder that went up to the roof for maintenance. Richie panicked, rushing to the edge of the roof, stunned to see Eddie pulling himself up, grimacing every time he had to support his weight going upwards with his right arm. He saw Richie, nearly pausing, but steeled himself.

Richie stuck out his hand to pull Eddie up. "What the hell are you doing? Why are you - how do you even know about this place?" Richie said, confused and yet a bit relieved to see his friend.

"Bill told me to come here."

"*Shit.*" No doubt Bill wanted him to talk to Eddie, or worse, have Eddie be a messenger for Bill's disappointment in him. "Tell Bill I didn't mean the shit I said, he can chew me out, I'm-"

Eddie shook his head. "Bill didn't say anything other than to come here."

The sky had dimmed to a purplish haze, the last rays of the sun and the neon sign of the arcade casting a glow upon Eddie, who was looking at Richie like he had just been seeing him for the first time, really seeing him.

"You don't like your mark because you're afraid of what it means." Eddie stated, matter-of-factly.

Richie couldn't muster any witty comments or jabs at Eddie. He had always been the one able to really get right past all of Richie's defenses and see what he couldn't show to the rest of the world.

"My parents already barely put up with me," Richie said, sitting down on the roof, looking at his shoes. "They only need one good reason to boot me out and-" Richie's voice cracked, and he felt a lump in his throat. "I can't afford that, I have to be *normal*. This stupid fucking soulmate bullshit is just the last straw and I can't do anything about it."

Eddie sat down with him, not looking at Richie either. Richie almost wished he did, just so he could see what he was thinking, but if he looked at him he would read into Richie.

“Richie... “ Eddie started a thought, then paused. There was a specific look Eddie always got when he was tripping over everything in his mind, unable to land on just the right thing.

Instead, Eddie pulled out the pair of scissors he had taken from the kitchen, and without waiting for any indications from Richie, began tearing into the cast covering his right arm, shearing his way through the tough wrapping, his arm spiking with pain here and there, but he needed to do this.

Richie meant to protest, to stop Eddie, but he was dead set on removing the cast, and Richie could only watch in fear.

Fear that there might be nothing at all.

Eddie finally dug through the rest of the cast, unwinding wrapping and tearing it off, wedging it further open until he could pull it off, gradually and jerkily.

And then the full cast was discarded upon the roof.

There, on Eddie’s wrist, was not just the mark indicating you would meet your soulmate, the stark black bands - but it was filled in completely.

Matching Richie’s exactly.

Neither of them could say anything, just taking in what it all meant. What they meant to each other. What this would mean for their future and how scary it might be and -

How wonderful it might be.

Eddie finally looked at Richie, their eyes meeting, communicating more through their silence than they ever could have with their words. Two roughed up boys with more memories than they should have been forced to carry and more love than they knew how to understand.

And as Eddie leaned in, meeting Richie in their first kiss, as soulmates, the night above twinkled with the first visible stars. Always there, but never revealed until just the right moment, where they would live infinitely, never fading and never sleeping.

And their love was those stars.

Notes for the Chapter:

- tumblr: imreddieforanything -